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Economic Matters Committee
Chair
Property and Casualty Insurance
Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Senator William C. Smith Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Md. 21401

Mr. Chairman,

I am writing in support of HB-123, reestablishing the HOV-EV Permit program.

Over the last ten years, more than 60,000 Marylanders have transitioned to driving electric vehicles (EVs) because of incentives like the EV-HOV Permit.¹ High-occupancy vehicle lanes along Interstate 270 in Montgomery County and U.S. 50 in Prince George's County are reserved for carpools, van pools, buses and motorcycles during the morning and evening rush.² Since 2010, drivers of plug-in-electric or hybrid vehicles have been allowed, through a special permit, to use HOV lanes in Maryland regardless of the number of passengers.³ Over 13,000 EV drivers took advantage of this program before it expired in 2022.⁴ HB0123 will renew this program until 2025 and will require further study of the program to determine whether it is worth renewing again after 2025.

As battery capacity grows and charging stations become more widely available, thousands of Marylanders utilize state and federal incentive programs to buy electric or hybrid vehicles.⁵ The

¹ Luz Lazo, *HOV privileges are ending for drivers of electric vehicles in Maryland*, The Washington Post (Aug. 11, 2022, 6:00 AM), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/transportation/2022/08/11/maryland-ev-hybrid-hov-lanes/>

² *Id.*, at 1

³ *Id.*, at 1

⁴ *Id.*, at 1

⁵ Austin Igleheart, *State Policies Promoting Hybrid and Electric Vehicles*, *Energy*, National Conference of State Legislatures (Apr. 26, 2022), <https://www.ncsl.org/energy/state-policies-promoting-hybrid-and-electric-vehicle>

loss of the exemption for electric vehicles comes as demand for EVs continues to rise; EV registrations rose from 609 in 2012 to 62,744 in the summer of 2022, according to the MVA.⁶

HB 0123 is just one tool Maryland can use to expedite the transition from gas guzzling cars to more sustainable electric vehicles without causing unnecessary delays on the highways. This low-cost, easily administered program will further incentivize more Marylanders to switch to EVs and move away from vehicles powered by fossil fuels. Electric vehicles are an important part of achieving our carbon-emissions reductions goals in the state. As we transition to a clean, green economy in Maryland it is important that we consider the role personal vehicles and transportation play in that future.

Thank you for your time, and I urge a favorable report for HB 123.

Respectfully,



Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo

⁶ Maryland Department of Transportation, *MDOT/MVA Electric and Plug-in Hybrid Vehicle Registrations*. <https://opendata.maryland.gov/Transportation/MDOT-MVA-Electric-and-Plug-in-Hybrid-Vehicle-Regis/qtcv-n3tc/data>

See also Zero Emission Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Council, *Annual Report 2022*. Maryland Department of Transportation (2022), [ZEEVIC_2022Rprt_t_v4d.pdf \(maryland.gov\)](#)